

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CPR-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 IGA-02 SWF-02 EB-11 COME-00

TRSE-00 IO-14 FEA-02 SAM-01 EUR-25 DRC-01 MC-02

ACDA-19 PC-10 /204 W

----- 078468

R 251207Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8164

INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMCONSUL ASMARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 3282

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MASS OVIP PINS ET UR US

SUBJ: DISCUSSION WITH FONMIN ON FORTHCOMING VISIT
TO WASHINGTON AND OTHER SUBJECTS

REF: ADDIS 3189

1. SUMMARY: IN CONVERSATION WITH FONMIN DR. MINASSIE MARCH 22, HE INFORMED ME OF FLAGRANT INTERVENTION BY SOVIET EMBASSY PERSONNEL DURING RECENT REBELLION AND GENERAL STRIKE; REQUESTED THAT EMBASSIES OF FRIENDLY COUNTRIES MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO PREVENT SURREPTITIOUS ENTRY INTO ETHIOPIA OF WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVES; STATED THAT NEW GOVERNMENT PLANS NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN PREVIOUS FOREIGN POLICY; AND PROVIDED A FEW ADDITIONAL DETAILS REGARDING PLANNED VISIT TO WASHINGTON OF DELEGATION HEADED BY HIMSELF.

2. FONMIN DR. MINASSIE CALLED ME IN MARCH 22. AT OUTSET I EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT HE IS CONTINUING AS FONMIN IN
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NEW CABINET. HE THANKED ME BUT INDICATED HE HAD ONLY RE-

LUCTANTLY CONSENTED TO CONTINUE.

3. MINASSIE THEN SAID IEG WISHED INFORM CERTAIN FRIENDLY COUNTRIES OF HIS RECENT CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR. FONMIN HAD TOLD AMBASSADOR IEG HAD POSITIVE PROOF THAT 12 SOVIET EMBASSY PERSONNEL HAD ENGAGED IN IMPROPER ACTIVITIES DURING RECENT TURBULENT PERIOD. IN CONTACTS WITH LABOR UNION AND OTHER ETHIOPIAN PERSONNEL THEY HAD SOUGHT TO RADICALIZE SITUATION AND HAD SPREAD SUBVERSIVE PROPAGANDA. FONMIN TOLD ME IEG WOULD NOT MAKE MATTER PUBLIC BUT THAT HE HAD EXPRESSED GREAT DISPLEASURE TO SOVIET AMBASSADOR, WHO HAD FLATLY DENIED VALIDITY OF ACCUSATIONS. FONMIN ALSO SAID, IN A TONE OF INCREDULITY, THAT SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN COURSE SAME CONVERSATION HAD URGED THAT IEG PERMIT SOVIET CONSULATES IN ASMARA, HARRAR AND OTHER ETHIOPIAN TOWNS. MINASSIE SAID HE HAD LONG OPPOSED THIS PROPOSAL AND WOULD CONTINUE DO SO.

4. FONMIN THEN SAID IEG ALSO WISHED REMIND CERTAIN FRIENDLY EMBASSIES THAT THEY SHOULD EXERCISE EXTREME CARE UNDER PRESENT DELICATE CIRCUMSTANCES LEST ANY WEAPONS OR EXPLOSIVES SHOULD REACH ETHIOPIANS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. THERE WAS ALWAYS SOME DANGER OF THIS BUT MATTER IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT AT THIS TIME. HE CONTINUED THAT US HAD HAD CASE OF THIS TYPE "PERHAPS 6 OR 7 YEARS AGO" WHERE IT HAD BEEN DISCOVERED THAT "CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS" BEING SENT TO ETHIOPIAN EMPLOYEE OF EMBASSY THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS WERE ACTUALLY WEAPONS. EMBASSY HAD DISCOVERED THIS CASE AND HAD THEN TURNED ETHIOPIAN EMPLOYEE OVER TO IEG FOR APPROPRIATE ACTION. I RESPONDED THAT I WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THIS CASE BUT THAT WE WOULD TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT ANY OCCURRENCE OF THIS NATURE.

5. I ASKED MINASSIE WHETHER HE ANTICIPATED ANY DIFFERENCE IN FOREIGN POLICY BETWEEN LAST GOVERNMENT AND PRESENT GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT HAD HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH FOREIGN POLICY AND THAT NO CHANGE WAS ANTICIPATED.

6. I THEN MENTIONED MY TALK ON PREVIOUS DAY WITH PRIMIN ENDALKACHEW. ON SUBJECT OF PORT CONGESTION, FONMIN SAID THAT EMPEROR HAD "GOVERN ORDERS" SEVERAL HOURS EARLIER THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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ALL NECESSARY MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN IMMEDIATELY TO CLEAR UP PORT CONGESTION AND INSURE DELIVERY OF RELIEF SUPPLIES. WITH REGARD TO PLANS FOR FORTHCOMING VISIT OF HIGH LEVEL DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON (REFTEL), MINASSIE SAID HE HAD NOT YET INFORMED ME THEREOF BECAUSE THERE WOULD SHORTLY BE MEETING OF ALL CONCERNED TO DECIDE ON MOST CONVENIENT DATE AND ON MEMBERS OF DELEGATION. HE INDICATED THAT HE WOULD STILL WANT TO SEE SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN, AS HAD

ORIGINALLY BEEN ENVISAGED, TO "EXPLAIN SITUATION HERE". DELEGATION WOULD WISH DISCUSS NEW FACTORS AFFECTING USG-IEG RELATIONSHIP AND WOULD SEEK INFORMATION IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE FIELD REGARDING SIZE OF AVAILABLE CREDITS, NATURE OF CREDIT TERMS, AND POSSIBLE INCREASE IN GRANT PROGRAM. HE MENTIONED THAT SOMALI THREAT MAY BE GREATER NOW THAN PREVIOUSLY IF SRG BELIEVES ETHIOPIA HAS BEGUN TO "PULL ITSELF TOGETHER" IN MORE EFFECTIVE FASHION. DELEGATION WOULD INCLUDE MEMBERS FROM MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT, AND POSSIBLY MINISTRY OF FINANCE.

7. I INQUIRED WHETHER INCLUSION OF DEVELOPMENT OFFICIAL MEANT THAT DELEGATION WOULD ALSO BE SEEKING AN INCREASE IN US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. DR. MINASSIE INDICATED HE DID NOT KNOW BUT ADDED THAT IEG IS CURRENTLY CONSIDERING WHETHER TO SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM VARIOUS FOREIGN COUNTRIES " TO RESCUE US FROM HEAVY FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN IN RECENT WEEKS". WHEN I ASKED WHETHER NEW GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO SEEK FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM SAUDI ARABIA OR IRAN, MINASSIE REPLIED THAT THIS IS "UNDER CONSIDERATION".

8. COMMENT: PRESENT EMBASSY PERSONNEL ARE UNAWARE OF EARLIER INCIDENT MENTIONED IN PARA 4. WE ARE DOUBLE-CHECKING PROCEDURES GOVERNING MAC FLIGHTS AND IMPORTATION THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS TO MAKE SURE NO LOOP-HOLES EXIST. MAAG CHIEF HAS ASSURED ME THAT USE OF APO FACILITIES BY ETHIOPIAN OFFICERS TRAINING IN US IS BEING VERY CLOSELY MONITORED.

9. COMMENTS ON DR. MINASSIE'S PLANNED VISIT WERE INCLUDED IN REFTEL. WYMAN

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